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## Nicholson had routine assignment

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Arthur D. Nicholson Jr., the Army major slain Sunday in East Germany, was assigned to an intelligence-gathering mission established at the end of World War II and considered routine duty today.

The Potsdam Mission, an operation of the U.S. Army, has for four decades gathered intelligence in East Germany under an accord with the Soviets and the Western Allies—Britain, France and the United States. It is all perfectly legal.

"They act as military attaches would," said a person in the State Department who is familiar with the operation. "The Soviets do the same thing in West Germany."

Manned 24 hours a day, the mission has a staff of 14 under the command of Col. Roland Lajoie. Personnel report for duty in East Germany but live in West Berlin.

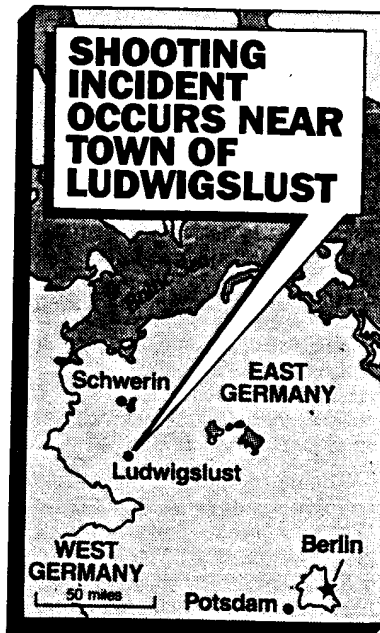
Each of the three missions in East Germany — British, French and the U.S. Army — has a house, a suburban villa, and they have their people there rotating in and out.

The liaison teams, as they are still called after their occupation function, are under the jurisdiction of the commander in chief, Group Soviet Forces, Germany, and it is to that command the United States initially would lodge a formal complaint concerning the killing.

"There have been incidents over the years," the State Department man said. "I would not want to say there has ever been one this bad."

The Soviets have three such missions in West Germany, one in each of the former allied zones of the country and each limited to a staff of 14, under the agreement. Germany was divided into four zones after World War II, each zone assigned to one of the four major victors.

The Russians have missions in



Map by Elaine Cunter / The Washington Times

Frankfurt, Bunde and Baden-Baden, under the eyes of the U.S., British and French military.

The liaison teams travel regularly in unrestricted areas. They use military vehicles equipped with sensitive listening devices, cameras and telescopes.

"The Soviets issue maps, just the way the three allies do, and they have the permanently restricted areas marked," he said. "From time to time, temporarily restricted areas — when there are military maneuvers, usually — are announced with the map coordinates."

While Pentagon officials conceded Maj. Nicholson was on an "intelligence-gathering operation," they rejected the charge that he was a spy. Maj. Nicholson, a Russian linguist, was shot Sunday in Ludwigslust, about 85 miles northwest of Berlin.

"You can't call this man a spy because the ground rules for the operation of this mission are quite specific," said another source. "It's all very visible. The men assigned there can travel without escort, but they have to carry a special ID and everybody knows who they are."

— Miles Cunningham